



ILLUSTRATION BY MARTIN GEE

# LEAKY BUNKERS JOIN HISTORY OF BAD IDEAS

**STATEWIDE** A debate is swirling in Newport over two WWII cargo ships, the *USS Pasley* and *USS Hennebique*, which were used to create a dock in 1948. The *USS Pasley* shifts with the tide, threatening to discharge fuel and oil into Yaquina Bay.

Creating a dock by plunking down two bunkers poses the question, "What were they thinking?" This decision joins Florence's infamous exploding whale in Oregon's history of debacles resulting from poor planning.

**ROCK THE BOAT:** Using the ships to create a dock was more affordable than building one from scratch, but in 1996 this decision resulted in an oil leak that cost half a million dollars to clean up. The Port of Newport has \$18 million to contain the ships to prevent further leakage, but removal and disposal would cost an additional \$14.5 million.

**DON'T FOLLOW THE LIGHT:** Tourist might imagine the picturesque Yaquina Bay Lighthouse has a long history of guiding ships to safety, but it only operated for three years after being built in 1871. According to George Collins, member of the Friends of Yaquina Lights board of directors, the Army Corps of Engineers did not recommend building the Bay Lighthouse. Its light was only visible for eight miles and the bay was too dangerous to navigate at night before the jetties were built, making

the lighthouse useless. In 1873, the Yaquina Head Lighthouse replaced it.

**BEHOLD, THE ENERGY OF THE FUTURE:** Not biodiesel — nuclear power. At least that's what Portland General Electric thought when it built the Trojan Nuclear Power Plant in the 1970s for \$450 million. Trojan generated electricity for fewer than 20 years before it was permanently closed in 1993. Decommissioning the plant cost \$429 million and was completed in 2004, though spent fuel continues to be stored at the site. Last year, the Oregon Public Utility Commission ordered PGE to refund \$33.1 million to its customers, part of the money PGE had collected to cover its unrecovered investment in Trojan.

**A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT:** The construction of The Dalles Dam in 1957 not only increased the navigability of the Columbia River, it submerged Celilo Falls, a culturally and economically significant fishing ground for several Native American tribes. Now, through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, two tribal fishing sites will be constructed, one at Dallesport, Wash., and one downstream in the Wyeth area.

Will the new I-5 bridge clear up congestion or create more traffic? Is wind power the solution to the state's energy needs? Only time will tell if the bold decisions of the present pay off or become the embarrassing snafus of the past. **JENNY FURNISS**